DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE BLOGGERS ROUNDTABLE WITH JACKIE BING, DIRECTOR, AIR FORCE PERSONNEL CENTER (ARPC) PROGRAM MANAGEMENT; ANDY HAMILTON AND CAROL KLEIN, ARPC QUALITY ASSURANCE EVALUATORS SUBJECT: TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES IN MAINTAINING AIR NATIONAL GUARD AND AIR FORCE RESERVE PERSONNEL RECORDS TIME: 3:00 P.M. EDT DATE: WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 18, 2010

(Note: Please refer to www.dod.mil for more information.)

CHRISTEN MCCLUNEY (Office of the Secretary of Defense Public Affairs.): Hello, I'd like to welcome you all to the Department od Defense Bloggers Roundtable for Wednesday, August 18, 2010. My name is Christen McCluney with the Office of the Secretary of Defense Public Affairs, and I will be moderating our call today.

A note to bloggers on the line. Please remember to clearly state your name and blog or organization in advance of your question; respect our guest's time, keeping questions succint and to the point; and please place your phone on mute when you're not asking a question. Today, our guest is Jackie Bing, director, Air Reserve Personnel Center Program Manager. She is joined by Andy Hamilton, Carol Kline and Greta Burroughs (sp), quality assurance evaluators for ARPC. They will discuss how employees at ARPC headquarters have been securely converting thousands of paper and microfiche personnel records to an electronic format for Air National Guardsmen and Reservists.

We're pleased to have our guests. Ma'am, please start with any remarks, and then we will go into questions. The floor is yours.

MS. BING: Well, good afternoon. We are very pleased to be able to share with you our efforts in scanning and converting Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve members' records to an electronic format. And from our blog topic, you can see that we have been converting thousands of records on our military personnel.

Records management is one of our key functions here at the center, and we maintain both paper and microfiche records on members. These records represent Reservists' careers from the moment they are gained to the Reserve until death, and even beyond, so everything has been very paper-intensive, paper-dependent, and we feel that there are some exciting things that are happening as our whole workforce is being transformed, and we're right in the middle of it with our effort. So

specifically today, we are talking about the scanning efforts that we have.

So far, we have been converting records to our automated records management system, and this is a system that actually stores, and we're able to retrieve records. It's an optical disk form or technology that is being used. And going forth here, with this effort -- it's part of our -- the larger picture of our strategic plan, but also we are moving to Buckley Air Force Base, and so we have celebrated our efforts. Based on that, we want to make sure that we are capable of going to our new building.

We have converted over 120,000 records since our efforts started two years ago. And that's basically what I wanted to tell you. And I'm sure more information will come out through your questions.

MS. MCCLUNEY: Thank you. We had someone else join the call. Can I ask who that was please? (No audible response.) Okay. Then we'll go ahead and get started.

Chuck, you were first on the line.

Q   Good afternoon. Chuck Simmins from America's North Shore Journal. Can you name the system that you're using for scanning, the brand name?

MR. HAMILTON: Well, the system -- the actual -- you're talking about the actual software or hardware or --

Q   Yeah. MR. HAMILTON: -- are you talking about this archive medium?

Q   The -- the software that you're using for the conversion.

MR. HAMILTON: The actual software is a Kofax software. It's a scanning version.

Q   Okay. And what hardware are you using to do the scanning?

MR. HAMILTON: We're using Fuji high-speed scanners.

Q   Okay. And what document format does that result in?

MR. HAMILTON: Basically, we can put it into any type of format we like. We're putting them into TIFFs because that's how the Automated Records Management System -- or as we call it, the ARMS -- was first initiated.

Q   Okay. The TIFF -- is the TIFF word-searchable at all? Or --

MR. HAMILTON: It is not.

Q   Okay.

MR. HAMILTON: Nor is the ARMS system for that matter. And that is something that they are currently working on and hope to -- I think they're making a big push to do that within the next couple of years, to have the ARMS database searchable.

Q   Okay.

In the scanning process, how are you conducting quality control to ensure that every piece of paper in the file's being scanned and is coming through both clearly and aligned correctly?

MR. HAMILTON: Yeah, as part of our contract, we have a 100 percent quality review prior to downloading to the ARMS and after the actual scanning. So there's 100 percent quality review --

Q   All right.

MR. HAMILTON: -- on these documents.

Q   So the standard is 100 percent?

MR. HAMILTON: Yes, the standard is 100 percent.

Q   Okay. How many records do you need to scan? And where are you in the process?

MR. HAMILTON: Well, we've apparently scanned approximately 120,000 of about a quarter million that we had in file and in a room upstairs where we work. We're currently working on a project to scan the last 130,000 paper records, and then that will be the end of the paper here at ARPC.

We're also working on another contract to convert all of our microfiche documents to digital as well. And we hope to have that complete by -- all done -- all of this done by March 31 next year.

MS. MCCLUNEY: Tanya, do you have a question?

Q   Yes. Hi, this is Tanya from the Air Force.

I'm wondering how will personnel and members be able to access their documents.

MR. HAMILTON: Well, at this particular point in time -- in fact, in April of 2008, we rolled out what's called the "Personnel Records Display Application," commonly referred to as PRDA. Basically, that allows members from a .mil or .gov computer to access their UPRG documents 24/7/365.

MS. MCCLUNEY: Okay. I have a question that was submitted by e-mail from Dale Kissinger. He would like to know what are the parameters used to measure success of the scanning process.

MR. HAMILTON: Well, of course, the -- the measurement would be 100 percent legibile documents in the correct record with the correct metadata associated with it. So basically if it's -- if the right document's in the right records and we can read it, that is success.

MS. MCCLUNEY: Okay. Thank you. Chuck, back to you.

Q   Yes. The scanning and the review, is that being done by military personnel? Or do you have a contractor doing it?

MS. BING: We do have a contractor who is actually doing the scanning. However, Mr. Hamilton and Ms. Klein are evaluators, and they do all of the surveillance of the contract, making sure that all of the standards are being met and the full completion of the project as well.

Q   All right. And has -- this program is exclusive to the Reserve component? It's not -- the regular military is not involved with it?

MS. BING: The regular military has done their -- and is doing their own projects as well. This is really a total force effort that we get -- that we become a paperless environment. So scanning is taking place there at Randolph Air Force Base. Some of their work is completed. And then we are also doing our effort here, too.

Q   Okay.

MS. MCCLUNEY: Tanya, do you have another question?

Q   No, not right now. Thank you.

MS. MCCLUNEY: Okay. I have another question from Dan Kissinger (sic\Dale Kissinger). He'd like to know with the large amount of data stored by the military for the sake of efficiency, will this process be studied for future use of scanning?

MR. HAMILTON: Well, the fact of the matter is we've been doing this scanning business since 1994. Prior to that, we were using microfiche images to maintain the records archive. And in 1994, they came on with the Automated Records Management System. So this is not something new. This is something that we've been doing a long time. We're very good at it. And this is actually -- we are hoping that this will be the end of any scanning that we do. So -- because what -- basically what we're looking forward to is creating an environment where documents are created within the system and go to the archive within the system.

So if I were bring a member into the Air Force, I would do a form and then I would send that form directly into our archive, and it would be there forever, no paper whatsoever. So with the use of smart forms, we're trying to make this a 100 percent paperless environment. So we're hoping that this is going to be the end of the scanning.

MS. MCCLUNEY: Okay. And he'd also like to know how many personnel will be needed from start to finish for this process. Is there an automated method that will assist in speeding up the process?

MS. BING: We -- for this current project that we have, this -- the last 130,000, we -- the contractor has 116 personnel actually working that process.

Your question on the automated method. We did go to, actually, high-speed scanners that the contractors are using. Before that, they were actually having to print out a page, for example, make a copy, then get it scanned. And these scanners that they were able to bring in, and also introduce through ARPC as well, early on, allowed them to not have to take that extra step. So they get more done in a -- in a quicker fashion.

MS. MCCLUNEY: Chuck, do you have another question?

Q   Yes. You're talking about a remaining workload of around 130,000 files. Do you have any idea how many average sheets are in those files? And are we talking duplex scanning, or are we talking single-side scanning?

MR. HAMILTON: We have duplex ability, so yes. Basically what we're talking about -- the records we're working on now are sort of our older records, if you will, members who have retired and/or separated. Some of them are very large. So the actual contents could be anywhere from 40 to 60 pages. But we don't scan every single document of every single record. We have a list of documents as a normal course of business that we scan into the master record.

And that usually, on an average record, ends up to be about 20 documents.

Q   Okay. So the entire file doesn't get -- doesn't get scanned.

MR. HAMILTON: That's correct.

Q   What happens to the file after it's been scanned and verified that it -- the scanning was accurate?

MR. HAMILTON: The documents, by order of the National -- the NARA, the National --

MS. BING: Archives --

(Cross talk.)

MR. HAMILTON: -- Archives and Records Administration --

MS. BING: (Chuckles.)

MR. HAMILTON: -- thank you all very much -- has directed that the documents be destroyed.

Q   And how do you do that?

MR. HAMILTON: We have a company that comes out here and turns them into dust. (Chuckles.)

MS. BING: And they are of course very secure, and with --

MS. KLEIN: Privacy Act --

MS. BING: -- in accordance with the Privacy Act and everything that we need to make sure that that record is actually destroyed, we can visibly go see them do it, et cetera.

MS. KLEIN: And they do it on site. They do it here.

Q   Okay. And so in -- what's the time frame for finishing the scanning portion -- the paper portion of this project?

MR. HAMILTON: March -- 31 March 2011.   Q   And then how long do you anticipate the microfiche portion will take?

MR. HAMILTON: We also expect that to be totally digitized by the same date.

Q   Now how is that being done? Obviously that's a little bit different process.

MR. HAMILTON: Yeah. Actually, what we're doing is, we're sending this out to a different contractor, or where -- we haven't let the contract yet, but digitizing microphone requires different equipment, and that will also be done, again, on high-speed scanners.

        I couldn't speak to the software, because that would be a private business' choice, but basically it's the same thing. We're going to have those scanned to hard drive and disc, both, for us.

Q   And what are you going to do with the leftover space?

MR. HAMILTON: (Laughter.) Well, we won't have any leftover space by the time we move. (Laughs.)

MR.   : We won't be in the building.

MS. KLEIN: We're moving to a new building that doesn't have the space. That's part of the push. (Laughter.)

MR.   : Much smaller.

Q   Thank you.

MS. MCCLUNEY: I have one more question from Dale Kissinger. He'd like to know how far back will you go in the records and bring them to digital format.

MR. HAMILTON: There's not -- there's not a certain cutoff date, per se, as to how far we will go back. If we have a record that needs to be scanned, regardless of how old the record is, we're going to scan it.

However, as a general course of business, we quit shipping records to the National Personnel Records Center in October 2004. So everything forward of October 2004 is basically where we're going back to. That is what we have on hand. So any of those records prior to 1 October 2004 are being stored and managed by the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis.

MS. BING: (Audio break) -- 700 Page Boulevard.

MS. MCCLUNEY: Thank you.

Tanya, do you have any further questions?

Q   No, thank you.

MS. MCCLUNEY: Chuck, do you have any further questions? Q No, I don't. Thank you.

MS. MCCLUNEY: Okay. Well, thank you all. We've had some great questions and comments today.

As we wrap up today's call, I'd like to ask Ms. Bing if she has any final comments.

MS. BING: Well, I would like to just let you -- give you an idea of the type of records that we are dealing with. We, for example, have one record that goes all the way back to 1942.

The reservist came in in the Enlisted Reserve Corps and went to aviation cadet school, became a pilot. And he retired and started drawing pay.

And that record is one of the records that we were able to scan, put in electronic format, and give that member better access to that record. And that's pretty much what we're -- what we're doing.

I just thought that would be a good example for you, to see the importance of the work.

MS. MCCLUNEY: Well, thank you, ma'am.

Today's program will be available online at the Bloggers Roundtable link on dodlive.mil, where you will be able to access a story based on today's call, along with source documents such as bios, audio files and print transcripts.

I want to remind everyone that I will send a transcript when Federal News completes it. You have been listening to Jackie Bing, director -- Air Reserve Personnel Center program management director.

Again thank you and our bloggers and journalists who participated again. This concludes today's event. Feel free to disconnect at any time.

END.